

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A payment system for automatic vending machines, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising at least one programmable micro processor or electronic chip (10), ~~which can be suitably programmed so as to~~ for univocally identifying the fingerprints (30) of each user of said machines, by comparing memorized in memory elements (40) ~~and comparison~~ of certain scanning points of ~~their~~ fingerprint images with the fingerprints (30) of each said user of said machine to effect electronic identification.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The payment system according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said memorized fingerprints (30) are associated with a price corresponding to ~~the~~ a product within said automatic vending machine and selected by said user, by means of a push button device (52), so as to progressively scale down its value (70) on the basis of ~~the~~ said products consumed (90).

Claim 3 (currently amended) The payment system according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said fingerprints (30) are acquired by means of an electronic acquisition apparatus (20) and identification and comparison procedure (60).

Claim 4 (currently amended) The payment system according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said push-button device (52) comprises at least one key (51) for controlling ~~the~~ a remaining credit determined from a user's prior depositing of currency in said automatic vending machine, by the pressing of at least one fingertip, whose fingerprint (30) ~~has~~ had been memorized.

Claim 5 (currently amended) The payment system according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said fingerprints (30) are acquired by means of an electronic processing of ~~the~~ images relating to the geometric forms of the said fingerprint (30).

Claim 6 (currently amended) The payment system according to claim [[1]] 5,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein said micro-processor (10) transmits ~~the~~ reading data of said
fingerprints (30) to said memory (40), which acts as an archive, associating ~~the~~ amounts
paid by said users to ~~the~~ said digital images of the fingerprints (30) corresponding to said
users.